American Legion Auxiliary of South Dakota

District 7





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District dues are due $20.00 per year. You can mail them to Roxanne Whalen, District 7 Treasurer
500 S Tessa Ave
Hartford SD 57033.
District dues are not part of your obligations, please do not send them to the Department office.

Please do not forget to send your unit's Obligations and Officer Report to the Department Secretary American Legion Auxiliary Department of South Dakota
PO Box 983, Mitchell SD 57301
(605) 461-3389
www.sdlegionaux.org



Veteran's Day is just around the corner. Are you planning on attending a program, do something special? Remember to report it. If you have a program, please add to the District 7 Facebook page so others might have the opportunity to attend. Share your photos also.

District news

I want to thank everyone who attended the District 7 meeting. I hope you took home a lot of great information for your units. A special thanks to the officers that stepped in for me while I attended my daughter's wedding. I appreciate all of you. Our next Conference will be Mid-Winter February 19th, 2027 – February 21, 2027, at the Arrowwood Resort & Convention Center, Oacoma SD. (Hotel Reservations: (605) 234-6376.)

Unit Mailings: We are aware of the delay in receiving the Fall mailing. They were sent to the printer in September. We are hopeful that you will receive them soon. In the meantime, the website is being updated and many of the forms needed are on there. www.sdlegionaux.org. If you have questions or need some additional help, please let me know. With the high cost and delays of postal mailings, the Department is researching options for distributing information. I am asking all units to reply to this newsletter letting us know the best way to receive information. This is just an informational gathering and nothing has been changed.

Membership Dues: Hopefully everyone is working hard at renewing your unit memberships. We are off to a great start. President Patrice has shared the following

"Thank you for the dedication and energy you've put into gathering and submitting memberships! And a huge thank you to our Secretary Amy, for all of her hard work entering them into ALA MIS!

With South Dakota at 50% of our goal by Veterans Day, we have a milestone worth celebrating—and momentum worth building on!

Every membership brings us closer to our goal. Let's keep that energy going, encourage one another, and set our sights on 75% before 2027 begins. Together, we can start the New Year strong!"

FOCUSing on Veterans, their Families, and our Communities,

Patrice

Patrice Sorensen

President

Department of SD American Legion Auxiliary

Christmas Party Dates

Human Services at Yankton – Dec 16th, 5-7 pm
Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home Hot Springs – Dec 13th, 1-3 pm
Hot Springs VA Medical Center - Dec 12th, 1-3 pm
Ft. Meade VA Medical Center - Dec14th, 2-4 pm
Sioux Falls VA Medical Center - Dec 15th, 2-4 pm

Calendar

November

1 – Daylight Savings Time Ends

10 – Auxiliary Birthday

11 – Veteran's Day

15th DEC meeting

26 – Thanksgiving

December

07 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

19 - Nat'l Wreaths Across America Day

25 - Christmas Day

28 - Pledge of Allegiance Day



Department and National News:

HOMETOWN HEROES AWARD

Rose has asked us to include the following message: We would like to have at least one nomination per unit. This is any fireman, police, 911 operator, EMT and/or representatives from your local hospitals (details below). Thank you for all you do. Rose

Service Before Self: Heroes Among Us

Every uniform has a story. Every act of service has an impact. Help us recognize the heroes among us.

Help us Spotlight those who serve in your hometown. The American Legion Auxiliary National Security Program wants to recognize the extraordinary people who serve our nation and our communities. We invite you to nominate a service member, military spouse, or first responder whose service, sacrifice, leadership, or commitment deserves to be celebrated. These include law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and other public-safety professionals.

Our Hero Spotlight will share these stories through American Legion Auxiliary social media, helping our members and followers see the people behind the service and recognize the many ways individuals make a difference every day.

Please share only information and photographs that you have permission to provide. Do not include classified, sensitive, operational, or personally identifying information that should not be made public. To submit your hero go to: https://legion-aux.formstack.com/forms/hero_spotlight

Every community has a person they could nominate. Let South Dakota flood Formstack with our Hometown Heroes. This nomination would fall under National Security for reporting purposes.

Membership Eligibility Change Verbiage:

At the 2026 American Legion National Convention, delegates adopted new membership eligibility language for the American Legion Auxiliary — expanding eligibility and allowing more family members to join the ALA. The Legion has authority over the ALA's membership eligibility; the language change allows more people into our organization — strengthening our ability to better serve our veterans, military, and their families.

At the 2026 American Legion National Convention in Louisville, Ky., Resolution 19 was approved by more than a two-thirds majority. The resolution expanded the ALA's eligibility criteria. For example, it changed "grandmother" and "mother" to "grandparents" and "parents," "sisters" to "siblings," "daughters" to "children," and "granddaughters" to "grandchildren." The change also allows persons such as Gold Star Families who did not directly serve in the armed forces an avenue to join the American Legion Auxiliary and honor their relatives within the original two degrees of consanguinity, as the IRS references under 501(c)(19) tax-exempt status for auxiliaries.

Here is the OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: Section 2. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to:

(1) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of members of The American Legion; and

(2) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and any time after December 7, 1941, who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;

(3) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941, who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility period and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and

(4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.

The revisions to the ALA's eligibility mentioned above allow individuals the potential to be members of both the Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. The Legion's national judge advocate has confirmed that this dual membership does not constitute a conflict of interest with The American Legion

Some Frequently addressed concerns from National:

Does this mean men can join the American Legion Auxiliary now? The ALA ceased being an all-female patriotic service organization in 2019 when The American Legion voted at its 2019 National Convention to change “wife” to “spouse,” opening the doors for male spouses to join the ALA. **I am very disappointed in the gender-neutral language you guys went to.** The new eligibility criteria does not address gender in any capacity. The objective of the new wording was to expand the relationship types eligible to join the ALA and honor our military and veterans.

Why aren’t great-grandchildren eligible for membership? The IRS defines 501(c)(19) veterans service organization auxiliary degrees of relationship. Currently, the IRS limits the relationship to within two degrees, which is why we are unable to expand our relationships further.

Why is membership limited to two degrees of consanguinity (relationship)?

The IRS regulation concerning auxiliaries to veteran organizations states in part: “**At least 75 percent of its members are veterans, spouses of veterans, or related to a veteran within two degrees of consanguinity”** *this is where there is a bit of discrepancy and we can sneak in a few “greats”. The somewhat tolerable but also somewhat unpopular opinion is, is that if they don’t have any intensions of being an officer, nobody is going to check and if they want to help, we let them. Not everyone is ok with this. This would be for your Unit to discuss*

Are step-relatives eligible to join the ALA?

No., IRS regulations for 501(c)(19) organizations **do not include stepchildren** in their definition of an auxiliary organization.

Is there a way where the veteran does not need to be a member of The American Legion in order for their relative to join the ALA? Female veterans CAN join the ALA without being a member of The American Legion. If someone is eligible under a deceased veteran, they are also eligible to join the ALA without a Legion connection. **Does this mean trans women are now able to be Auxiliary members?** The ALA welcomes any and all persons who meet the established membership eligibility requirements to apply for membership. Gender identity, including transgender status, is not a factor in determining eligibility. All heartbeats fitting the eligibility criteria are welcome to apply for membership in the ALA. **Are ALA members eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion?** Only the eligibility criteria of the American Legion Auxiliary has been changed by The American Legion. Eligibility criteria for the Sons of The American Legion remains the same. Eligibility information for membership in the Sons of The American Legion can be found here: https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion